

National News

At the centre of public concern are rising unemployment, high fuel prices, slow business, corruption, and deteriorating service delivery.

BY MONITOR REPORTERS

As President Museveni begins his seventh elected term in office following yesterday's swearing-in ceremony, Ugandans across different sectors have outlined urgent demands such as job creation, lower taxes, improved healthcare and better public services within the first 100 days of the new administration.

Many citizens said the pomp and military displays witnessed during the inauguration would only hold meaning if the government swiftly addresses the economic hardships affecting ordinary Ugandans.

At the centre of public concern are rising unemployment, high fuel prices, slow business, corruption, and deteriorating service delivery.

Mr Isaac Wasswa, a boda boda rider operating around Clock Tower in Kampala, said many youth are struggling to survive and expect immediate government intervention.

"We want to see jobs and better working conditions. Many youths are idle, and life is becoming harder daily. Government should focus on helping people earn instead of only making promises," he said.

He also asked the government to reduce what he described as harassment of informal workers by security agencies in Kampala.

"Displacing informal workers from the capital won't make any big difference. What we need is proper planning and security officers who are better trained on how to handle civilians if the NRM is to stay relevant and loved in Kampala," he added.

Healthcare and education also emerged prominently among the concerns raised by residents interviewed by the *Daily Monitor*.

Ms Shamim Nakanwagi, a mother of three, said government health facilities continue to suffer from drug shortages while education costs remain unaffordable for many families.

"Government hospitals lack drugs while parents are struggling with fees and requirements. We expect to see improvement quickly because we haven't really felt the gains we are protecting," she said.

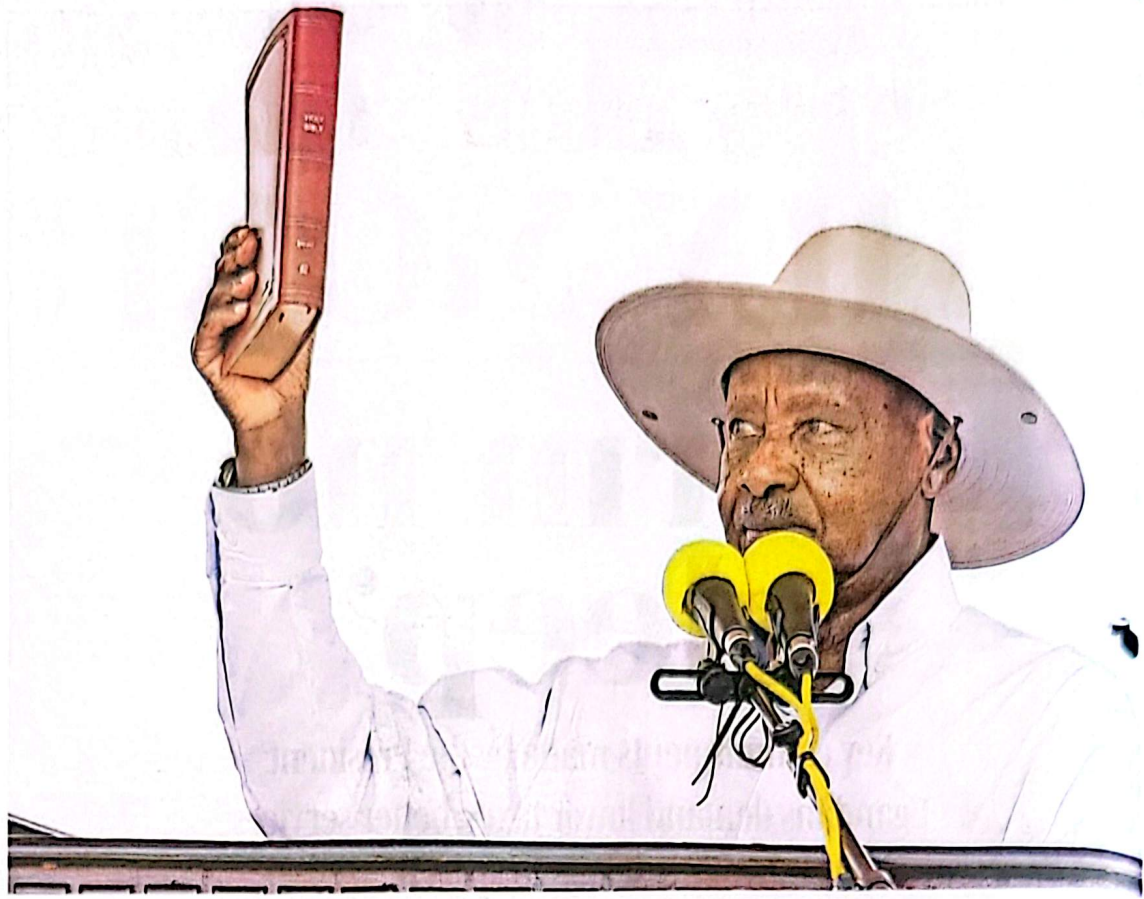
She also appealed to the government to stop evicting women from informal trading spaces, saying many single mothers survive on small-scale businesses.

Downtown traders similarly called for urgent economic reforms, saying businesses continue to struggle despite repeated government assurances about economic growth.

Mr Nordeen Sserunkuma said high taxes and low customer turnout have left many traders operating at a loss.

"What we expect first from the President is practical support for businesses. Let the government reduce taxes and stabilise the economy because many traders are operating at a loss," he said.

Others demanded stronger action against corruption, arguing that public resources continue to be lost through mismanagement while public services deteriorate.



President Museveni swears in yesterday for his seventh term in office at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds. PHOTO/STATE HOUSE

Ugandans demand lower taxes and better services

Ms Ruth Nakato, a university graduate who has spent nearly two years searching for employment, said youth unemployment should be treated as a national emergency.

"Many educated youths are at home without jobs. We keep hearing about programmes for youth empowerment, but people are not seeing the benefits on the ground, and the funds keep being embezzled by government officials," she said.

Mr James Okello, a graduate now working as a boda boda rider in Mukono, said many educated young people remain trapped in low-paying jobs despite years of study.

"You study, hoping for a better future, but after graduation, you remain unemployed for years. Some youths are now doing any job just to survive," he said.

Transport operators also expressed concern over rising fuel prices and poor road infrastructure.

Mr Mustafah Kabuye, a stage manager at Nateete-Busega in the New Taxi Park, said transport operators are increasingly squeezed by high fuel costs.

"Currently, a litre of fuel costs between Shs5,800 and Shs6,000, but whenever we increase transport fares, passengers complain because they are also struggling," he said.

He urged the government to engage fuel suppliers and stabilise prices while

Better roads. Taxi operators in the city centre spend a lot of time on the road, yet the distances are short. Roads like Nateete-Busega and Old Masaka

Road have taken too long to be completed despite being among the busiest routes

- Mustafah Kabuye, stage manager, Nateete-Busega, New Taxi Park

accelerating stalled road works in the Kampala Metropolitan areas.

"Taxi operators in the city centre spend a lot of time on the road, yet the distances are short. Roads like Nateete-Busega and Old Masaka Road have taken too long to be completed despite being among the busiest routes," he added.

Small-scale traders in Kikuubo also criticised tax policies and recent changes in shipping regulations introduced by the Uganda Revenue Authority.

Mr Umaru Kabugo, a dealer in children's shoes, said many small traders can no longer afford to import goods individually.

"Some of us cannot manage a full container alone. We used to share containers and pay together, but now URA wants every trader to pay individually,"

he explained. Meanwhile, calls were also made for the expansion of poverty alleviation programmes such as the Parish Development Model (PDM).

Ms Jane Namubiru, a market vendor in Kawempe, said although she benefited from the programme, the money remains insufficient to significantly improve businesses.

"The PDM money helped, but many people still need more support. Government should increase the funding to at least Shs3m so more families can improve their businesses," she said.

Others said the government should ensure Uganda's oil sector delivers direct benefits to ordinary citizens through employment opportunities and improved social services.

Ms Jane Atim, a teacher, said communities have waited too long to benefit from the country's oil resources.

"We have heard about oil projects for many years, but many people are still poor even in those areas housing the resources. We want to see oil production begin and communities benefit through jobs and better services," she said.

During the 2026 campaign trail, President Museveni repeatedly pledged wealth and job creation, improved healthcare, education, electricity, and water services.

The promises now form the basis up-

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Uganda launched an ambitious growth strategy to expand its economy from \$50b to \$500b by 2040. This 'ten-fold growth strategy' is anchored on agro-industrialisation, tourism, mineral development, and science and technology innovation (ATMS) to accelerate growth. This transformation will require doubling the size of the economy every five years, sustaining an annual GDP growth rate above 10 percent.

on which many Ugandans say they will judge the performance of his new administration in its first months in office.

The Electoral Commission declared Museveni the winner of the January 15, 2026, presidential election with 7.9 million votes, representing 71.65 percent of ballots cast, defeating his closest challenger, Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, who garnered 24.72 percent but rejected the results, describing them as fraudulent.

Compiled by Sylvia Namagembe, Shabibah Nakirigya, Karim Muyobo & Stephen Otage